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ABSTRACT

Students in need of supplementary reading and mathematics instruction were identified, their specific needs determined, and prescriptive activities formulated. Prescriptive reading and math teachers were responsible for program implementation and coordination with classroom teachers in three elementary schools and one junior high school. Staff training activities were carried out, and a total of 17 objectives were identified for participants in the reading component. Posttest findings using the Prescriptive Reading Inventory as the measuring instrument indicated that all students in the program obtained the goals. Fourteen objectives were identified for participants in the math component. The Diagnostic Mathematics Inventory was used as a posttest instrument and indicated that all but one of the participating students achieved all math goals. (MK)

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EVALUATION OF THE OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM

COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 31, NEW YORK CITY

1978-79 SCHOOL YEAR

PREPARED BY: Dr. Charles P. Kelly

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READING COMPONENT

The design identified pupils in need of supplementary reading instruction; diagnosed their specific needs, and provided intensive prescriptive instruction in line with an individual profile of diagnosed needs. This instruction was in addition to the basic tax levy program in each school.

Participants in groups of 8-10 received intensive corrective instruction (prescriptive teaching) in basic skills as well as related areas of language arts that contribute toward reading improvement and the development of desirable attitudes toward reading.

Instruction occurred in specific arrangements of: pupils, individual or small group; materials, flat print, manipulative, multi-media, multi-model, self-pacing, self-directing, self-correcting, teacher made and commercially prepared; teaching strategies, inline with particular strategies employed in class, developmental reading program or alternate strategies. Participants received this specialized instruction 2-3 times weekly which supplemented regular reading instruction in classroom (45 minutes each session). See appendix for enrollment, p. 11.

MATERIALS

For each level of the target population, special instructional materials, devices and equipment were provided. These were carefully selected to meet the instructional needs of participants, to encourage the utilization of a variety of approaches and techniques in line with

learning modalities, to stimulate interest in reading, and to encourage reading for pleasure, and to help provide a child-centered learning environment conducive to individual and group activities in line with assessment needs.

STAFF

Instructional Prescriptive Reading Teacher (PRT). The major responsibility of the Prescriptive Reading Teacher was the planning and implementation of an intensive instructional program for pupils at the intervention level served. The PRT had responsibility for interpretation of data. The PRT provided reinforcement of skill development for the developmental program as well as alternate instructional strategies for skill development. Each teacher had a system for directing pupils to planned specific activities.

Teacher records for each group included: mode of recording activities; number and variety of activities prescribed; anecdotal records group and individual profile of needs; material inventory; records of parent interviews, conferences; conference with supportive personnel; individual prescriptions where applicable; and pre-test scores.

Coordination with classroom teacher.

Each PRT had responsibility for utilization of appropriate teaching strategies which complimented and supported the in-class developmental reading program. Regular conferences were scheduled with classroom teachers for purposes of sharing: results of diagnostictesting; needs of individual children; materials and strategies used in the

classroom; and information about pupil progress. In order to insure most productive use of time both in the resource room and in the classroom it was necessary that: all diagnostic information be shared; the PRT have a thorough knowledge of the in-class instructional program; and the PRT and classroom teacher work as a team to support instructional service to disabled readers. Assistance was provided to classroom teachers in the implementation of an in-class diagnostic prescriptive program.

SUPERVISORY

Principal of each Title I school participating in this program had primary responsibility for the supervision, administration and instructional details for implementation of the program in each school.

The District Reading Coordinator, in addition to planning Title I Programs, had overall responsibility for coordinating reading programs in District #31. Specific responsibilities for this program included: (this is a tax levy position) conferencing with building principals re: implementation of program at school site; defining for staff the philosophy, rationale and origin of program; orientation of staff - PRT, EAS, classroom teachers; specific pre-service and in-service training including: PRT and EAS; ordering of supplies and equipment; conducting meetings and workshops of personnel for professional training review of problems; training classroom teachers to use various diagnostic tools to assess pupils reading skills and perceptive functioning, and to employ new methods and materials for up-grading reading instruction in the classroom; developing closer bond involving parents and community in under-

standing in the reading requirements and experiences of the children; and providing extensive oral language activities to promote growth in facility with language.

ACTIVITIES

Activities were tailored to meet the instructional needs of participants at various intervention levels. Particular attention was given to instructional strategies to develop pre-reading, initial and concomitant developmental reading skills. Pupils were directed according to individual pace, needs, interest. During a 45 minute session a pupil might: receive individual instruction; receive instruction as part of a smaller group; work individually at one or more skills; record his own reading, play back for self-evaluation; participate in teacher led group discussion; or engage in sustained silent reading.

Diagnosis was on-going and participants were involved in their own goal setting. A major thrust of the PRT assignment was to compliment and strengthen the regular classroom development reading program for participants. Participants engaged in the use of practice, reinforcement and application material, following skills teaching in areas of work analysis and vocabulary development in line with individual needs. Teacher directed, self-directed, and self corrected activities were provided. A wide variety of multi-level materials were also included.

STAFF TRAINING

The District Reading Coordinator provided the following staff devel-

opment activities: pre-service training of staff, including educational assistant; on-going in-service development; and a workshop for Diagnostic Prescriptive Reading. Monthly workshop meetings were held at various school sites for the purpose of intervisitation by project staff.

As individual needs indicated, topics from among the following were selected for emphasis: plugging into on-site programs, individualizing instruction, setting up learning centers, teacher made materials - sharing ideas, utilizing services of EA, how to conduct parent workshops, how to prepare and conduct grade-level conferences for classroom teachers, extending reading interests, special skills for content areas, and preparing demonstration lesson. On-going workshops and training were given "on site" by the reading coordinator.

MATHEMATICS COMPONENT

An activity oriented Diagnostic Prescriptive Program in mathematics remediation was implemented. Services in each school were individualized to meet the specific needs of each participant in the program. The program was staffed by a mathematics teacher at each school. The specific needs of each participant in the program were identified by the administration of diagnostic tests at the beginning of the program. Appropriate mathematics activities were prescribed based on the analysis of the diagnostic data. A student profile of mathematical concepts and skills was developed for each participant in the program. Diagnosis and prescription were on-going elements of the program.

A math lab room was developed with activity centers for remediation
See Appendix for enrollment, p. 11.

directed by the math teacher for small group instruction. No more than 10 participants were scheduled at any time. Planning was done by the math teacher. The mathematics teacher worked directly with the program participants and was responsible for recording each participants progress in the program. Each math teacher used the following materials: DPA Teacher's Manual, Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Tests, Squared Place Value Material, Squared Place Value Material Stamps, Unifix Cubes, Unifix Rubber Stamps, SEE Calculators, Place Value Cubes, Coin Stamps, Wooden Cubes, Let's Explore Mathematics, Let's Play Games in Mathematics, and Unimath.

The records maintained for each participant included: pre-test item analysis, pre-test, student profile and progress chart, post-test, and daily attendance records.

Functions of the Math Resource Teacher:

Administered a diagnostic test to the participants and hand scored it; prescribe appropriate mathematical experiences for each participant based on the analysis of the diagnostic data; record pre- and post-test data and keep on-going records of the progress of each participant; confer with classroom teacher to discuss the participants progress in the program; administered the post-test to the participants; attended in-service training and sharing meetings to further enhance their level of competency in: mathematical content and concepts, uses of materials and laboratory approaches to remediation in mathematics; and provided periodic reports to the Principal of their school as to the progress of the participants.

The math teacher conferred with the classroom teacher on a regular

basis to discuss the progress of the program participants and to make necessary adjustments in planning, scheduling, activities, materials, etc., to insure the maximum potential for success of the program.

ACTIVITIES

The basic approach employed in each of the two components was similar with a variety of organizational approaches used to accomplish program objectives.

SUPERVISORY

The mathematics supervisor had overall responsibility for: informing principals of the program guidelines and distribution of copies of the proposal to principals; defining areas of implementation, evaluation procedures, record-keeping, pupil rosters, teacher attendance records; and meeting with teachers of the program on a regular basis, make regular visits to all schools and all programs.

The math supervisor was also responsible for the instructional methodology for this program including: defining for the staff the philosophy, rationale and origin of the program; providing and disseminating information about the program to principals, staff members, community organizations, etc.; coordination of in-service training; providing on the job training staff; and assisted teachers in maintaining uniform attendance records, pupil profiles and progress charts.

STAFF TRAINING

Planning and sharing meetings of the mathematics teachers were

conducted by the math supervisor. Objectives of these meetings included: classroom organization and planning; refinement of record keeping devices - diagnosis and prescription; examination and discussion of the Teacher's manual of Title I math activities developed in the district; exploration; examination and discussion of new activities developed in the district; discussion of program problems, e.g. scheduling, grouping, selecting appropriate activities, etc.; sharing successes and failures; refinement of questioning skills; and individualization and grouping.

EVALUATION

The total treatment group served as the sample population.

Reading Component

The Prescriptive Reading Inventory was administered as the pretest in March and as the posttest in June. A total of 17 objectives were identified as appropriate for specific participants in the program. Table I presents each skill, the percentage of students passing the pretest, the percentage of students passing the posttest, and the number of students targeted for each skill. Examination skills were mastered by none of the students on the pretest and all of the students on the posttest.

Mathematics Component

The Diagnostic Mathematics Inventory was administered as the pretest in March and as the posttest in June. A total of 14 objectives were identified as appropriate for specific participants in the program. Table II

each skill, the percentage of students passing the pretest, the percentage of students passing the posttest, and the number of students targeted for each skill. Examination of Table II indicates that no students mastered any of the skills on the pretest and 13 of the 14 skills were mastered by all of the students on the posttest. The remaining objective was mastered by 41 of the 42 students.

This program has clearly attained its' objectives.

TABLE I

RESULTS ON THE PRESCRIPTIVE READING INVENTORY

SKILL	PRETEST % PASSING	POSTTEST % PASSING	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Initial Consonants	0	100	17
Final Consonants and Blends	0	100	24
Vowels	0	100	22
Variant Consonants	0	100	1
Contractions	0	100	3
Prefixes, Suffixes, Affixes	0	100	14
Syllables	0	100	6
Prepositions	0	100	3
Pronouns, Adjectives, Adverbs	0	100	6
Homographs	0	100	2
Word Meaning	0	100	6
Inference	0	100	15
Following Directions	0	100	1
Main Ideas	0	100	6
Drawing Conclusions	0	100	17
Sequence	0	100	1
Setting, Plot, Characters	0	100	7

TABLE II

RESULTS ON THE PRESCRIPTIVE MATHEMATICS INVENTORY

SKILL	PRETEST % PASSING	POSTTEST % PASSING	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Preoperational Concepts	0	98	42
Whole Numbers	0	100	2
Fractions	0	100	40
Decimals	0	100	16
Negative Numbers	0	100	3
Addition	0	100	18
Subtraction	0	100	15
Multiplication	0	100	11
Number Sentences	0	100	13
Number Theory	0	100	5
Estimation	0	100	5
Percent	0	100	8
Place Value	0	100	10
Number Lines	0	100	44

APPENDIX

ENROLLMENT IN THE OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM

	GRADES							
SCHOOL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
P.S. 19	7	7	8	7				
P.S. 20		12	5	8				
P.S. 45	14	16	8	5				
JHS 2						11	14	6